United Nations DP/2003/17

Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund

Distr.: General
9 April 2003

Original: English

Annual session 2003
6 - 20 June, New York
Item 7 of the provisional agenda
Human Development Report

Strengthening consultations with the Member States on the Human Development Report, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 57/264

Report of the Administrator

1. In its first regular session of 1994, the Executive Board welcomed the intention of UNDP to improve the process of consultation with Member States to refine the methodologies used in the Human Development Report, with a view to improving quality and accuracy without compromising editorial independence.

2. Over the years, these consultations have taken place at three points in the report preparation process. They have provided a valuable opportunity for an exchange of information and ideas between the Human Development Report Office (HDRO) and the Board.

3. During the 57th session of the General Assembly held in January 2003, resolution A/RES/57/264 again addressed the consultation process with Member States, inviting the UNDP Executive Board to include a separate agenda item on the Human Development Report in its annual work plan as a further means to improve the consultation process.

4. In line with this resolution, HDRO is committed to addressing concerns regarding the process of consultation and the search for a more satisfactory process. UNDP, and HDRO, appreciate the interest shown as an indicator of the value of the Human Development Report to delegations.

5. In recent months HDRO has requested suggestions on the improvements that delegations wish to see. HDRO would like to propose the following improvements to the current consultation process:

(a) **Increase the number of consultations.** We have experimented during the HDR2003 process on an increased number of consultations with the Executive Board, increasing consultations to a total of five. We are experimenting for the first time with a series of informal regional consultations, held shortly before the

03-32123 (E) 180403

launch of this year's HDR. It is hoped that these meetings will provide increased opportunities for discussion of questions and concerns.

(b) **Improve the quality of consultation.** In order to focus more intently on the substantive issues contained in each year's report, HDRO proposes to circulate proposed "messages" of the report earlier than in previous years. Our first experiment with this approach led to an excellent substantive discussion with delegations on 19 February 2003.

(c) **Hold special consultations on specific issues.** We have held a special Executive Board consultation on statistical issues, with the aim of deepening partnerships in the collective objective of improving data quality and consistency. Other topics may become relevant over time and benefit from special consultations.